ELECTIONS BC

A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

Service Plan

2008/09 - 2010/11

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Harry Neufeld

Message from the Chief Electoral Officer

It is my pleasure to present Elections BC's Service Plan for 2008/09 – 2010/11 to the Legislative Assembly.

This plan provides an overview of the challenges and work the organization will undertake in a truly unique period in Elections BC's history. During my term, there have never been so many challenges coming together at one time.

During this year, Elections BC will prepare for the May 12, 2009 General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform by:

- Implementing the 85 new electoral districts passed by the Legislative Assembly following the Electoral Boundaries Commission's review of the province's electoral boundaries.
- Preparing and initiating a targeted enumeration of the voting population.
- Preparing for election and referendum period activities that will culminate in General Voting Day on May 12, 2009.

Elections BC's staff are committed to a plan of activities that will deliver the scheduled electoral events as well as ensure organizational readiness for unscheduled events such as a recall or initiative campaign or a by-election.

Our administrative challenges are undertaken in an environment of continuing and troubling declines in voter turnout at elections across our country and elsewhere in the world. Through concentrated outreach and partnering efforts, Elections BC will expand its efforts to raise public awareness of the importance of the right to vote and the role of voting in a healthy democracy.

Having robust infrastructure systems is crucial to the successful delivery of electoral events. Elections BC will embark on a major update of key information systems starting immediately after the 2009 election to ensure the organization keeps current with its information technology environment.

Staff will also take a longer-term view and explore emerging voting, voting place and vote counting technologies to ensure we offer the flexible and efficient options voters of the future will demand.

Having a highly knowledgeable and professional workforce is critical to the success of Elections BC. We will continue to place a priority on the recruitment, training, development and retention of personnel who are uniquely equipped to administer electoral democracy.

As British Columbia's employment environment remains challenged by greater demand than available workers, Elections BC will continue to monitor market conditions and their impact on our need for the estimated 30,000 plus temporary workers required to deliver the 2009 General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform.

As we await the outcome of the May 2009 Referendum on Electoral Reform, staff understand the need to be well-positioned to adjust course and implement the BC-Single Transferable Vote electoral system by 2013 if the referendum meets legislated thresholds of support.

Our Service Plan outlines an ambitious and demanding program that will draw on the dedication, resourcefulness and considerable talents of the Elections BC team. As the custodian of British Columbians' cherished right to vote, Elections BC is committed to delivering a completely impartial, inclusive and accessible electoral process for all British Columbians.

Harry Neufeld
Chief Electoral Officer

The Organization

Elections BC is an independent, non-partisan Office of the Legislature responsible for conducting provincial general elections, by-elections, referendums, initiative petitions and recall campaigns as detailed in provincial legislation.

MANDATE

To administer the provincial electoral process in British Columbia in accordance with the *Election Act*, *Recall and Initiative Act* and *Constitutional Amendment Approval Act*.

VISION

To be leaders in electoral administration.

MISSION

To serve democracy in British Columbia through the fair and impartial administration of the provincial electoral process.

Core Program Areas

FOR OPERATIONAL PURPOSES, ELECTIONS BC IS DIVIDED INTO FIVE PROGRAM AREAS:

- **Executive**
- **Electoral Finance and Corporate Administration**
- **Corporate Planning and Event Management**
- **Voter Registration and Boundaries**
- **Information Technology**

Executive

The Executive program area provides organizational leadership and is responsible for legislation, Orders and Regulations, compliance, enforcement and investigations, inter-jurisdictional liaison, reporting to the Legislative Assembly, communications and voter outreach, and public-education programs regarding voter registration and the electoral process.

Electoral Finance and Corporate Administration

The Electoral Finance and Corporate Administration program is responsible for political party and constituency association registration, campaign finance reporting, advertising sponsor registration and financial disclosure as well as conducting financial compliance reviews of the political parties, constituency associations, candidates, advertising sponsors, leadership contestants and recall and initiative participants.

The program is also responsible for corporate administration and human resource services for Elections BC's core group of 44 public service employees and more than 30,000 temporary staff and election officials during major electoral events.

Core Program Areas

Corporate Planning and Event Management

The Corporate Planning and Event Management program area is responsible for the effective and efficient planning and administration of provincial electoral events including general elections, by-elections, referendums, and recall and initiative petitions. This includes ensuring Elections BC is in a constant state of readiness for non-scheduled events, as well as leading the planning, preparation and administration of scheduled events.

Corporate Planning and Event Management also manages Elections BC's District Electoral Officers, coordinates event support activities across other program areas and leads post-event reporting, evaluation, and assessment.

Corporate Planning and Event Management is also responsible for the organization's strategic planning and development, and maintenance of Elections BC's planning framework, risk management and performance measurement programs.

Voter Registration and Boundaries

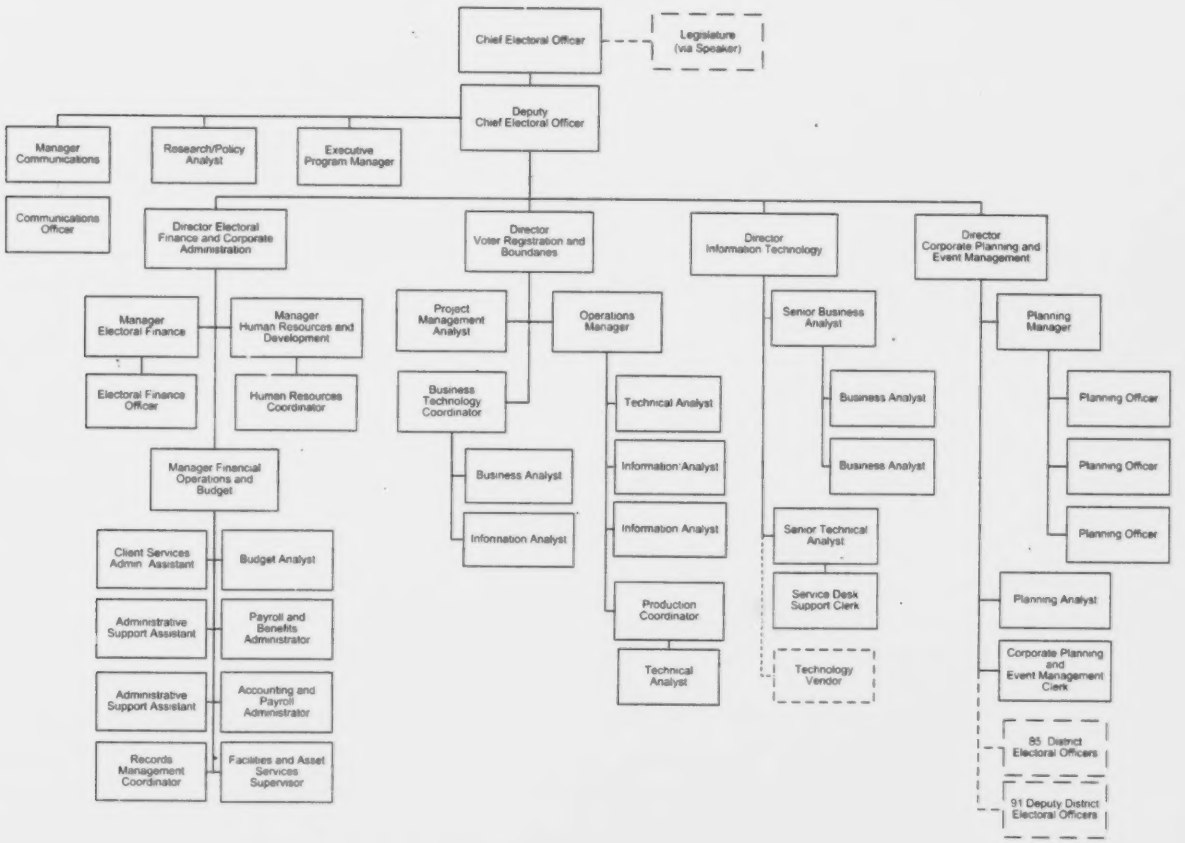
Voter Registration and Boundaries is responsible for voter registration, maintenance of the provincial voters list, maintenance of electoral district and voting area boundaries as well as the production of high-quality electoral data, reports, maps and information services.

The Voter Registration and Boundaries program area is also responsible for providing a variety of products necessary for the administration of electoral events including the provincial voters list, an address register, the integrated digital electoral atlas, electoral maps, street indexes and the Location Index.

Information Technology

The Information Technology (IT) program area provides information management systems, computer infrastructure, and technical services for Elections BC. The program area leads IT planning, develops and implements IT policies, procedures and standards, implements corporate IT initiatives and performs systems operations, administration, security and maintenance.

Organization Chart



Strategic Context

Elections BC staff are in the midst of a period of unprecedented challenge. Typically every four years, an enumeration of voters is conducted followed by a general election. An electoral boundaries commission is established after every second provincial election, so about every eight years changes to provincial electoral districts are made prior to the subsequent provincial general election, adding a further level of activity for electoral administrators.

In 2009, unique circumstances have come together to create four major electoral events for Elections BC to administer:

- **A redistribution of the province from 79 to 85 electoral districts**
- **A targeted enumeration to encourage voters to register, update or confirm their voter registration**
- **The 39th provincial general election, with six more electoral districts**
- **A second referendum on electoral reform**

This is a demanding agenda. To achieve the necessary milestones in support of the May 12, 2009 General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform, Elections BC's team of dedicated staff will:

- Implement the redistribution of the province into 85 electoral districts.
- Create maps and information materials to place an estimated 2,000,000 addresses into the correct electoral district and one of an estimated 10,000 newly created voting areas, each containing no more than 400 voters.
- Conduct a targeted enumeration of the province's 3,000,000 plus eligible voters between February 21, 2009 and April 21, 2009.
- Produce a high-quality voters list with a target of 90% of the province's eligible voters on the list and at least 80% of voter address records current.
- Recruit and train more than 30,000 temporary workers, in a challenging labour market, to deliver all of the activities associated with the May 12, 2009 votes.
- Ensure an estimated 1,500 voting places (schools, community halls, recreation centres etc.), 200 advance voting locations and 85 or more district electoral offices are rented or arranged and ready to receive voters.
- Ship more than 80 tons of ballot boxes, voting books, signs and supplies to support voting in communities as far apart as Telegraph Creek and Tofino, Lower Post and Langley.
- Conduct an intensive public information campaign to provide the public with:
  - The information they need on voter registration, the candidates in their electoral district, and voting opportunities.
  - Details of advance voting opportunities, General Voting Day voting locations and the results of all voting
  - Motivational information to hopefully inspire voters to embrace the importance of voting and participation in the democratic process
- Conduct the four electoral events in an efficient and impartial manner.

Planning Context

Election administration is a specialized business which, to the public eye, is generally only noticed during public voting activities. This unique environment belies the demanding and on-going work Elections BC undertakes to be ready at any time for a by-election, referendum or a recall or initiative campaign.

Elections BC has established goals and objectives that provide the foundation for a well-performing organization, continual readiness for an electoral event, efficient and inclusive administration of electoral events, and an organization that has the resources and infrastructure to meet the challenges of its mandate.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Elections BC plans to fulfill its mission and vision by achieving four goals:

1. **Ensure ongoing support and enhancement of the electoral process.**
2. **Ensure effective and efficient administration of electoral events.**
3. **Provide an inclusive and accessible electoral process.**
4. **Be a learning organization that develops and shares best practices.**

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

GOAL 1: ENSURE ONGOING SUPPORT AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Maintaining organizational and systems readiness for planned or unplanned electoral events requires cross-program coordination and integration between electoral events and throughout the annual business cycle. Keeping the electoral and other information systems up to date, maintaining the policy and legislative framework, ongoing investments in voter registration and ensuring human resource capacity is fulfilled are critical to the success of Elections BC.

Objectives:

Elections BC's objectives are to:

- Produce quality and timely electoral information.
- Develop and maintain policy and legislative frameworks that permit innovation and facilitate compliance.
- Maintain a sound infrastructure that meets our organization needs.

Strategies:

Elections BC intends to:

- Maintain and improve the voters list and address register through:
  - Implementation of data-quality standards and regular measurement of list quality against those standards
  - Expansion and enhancement of data access agreements
  - Review, analysis and improvement of data exchange and integration processes, and
  - Voter contact and mailings.
- Work proactively and cooperatively with policy and legislative specialists to shape the development of legislation to improve clarity and simplify processes and services for voters and clients.
- Monitor compliance and evaluate legislation and policy changes to address issues.
- Maintain a legislative interpretation compendium.
- Implement and maintain the corporate risk management program.
- Research requirements and investigate options for electoral technology renewal.

Elections BC's performance measure for Goal 1 will be:

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Voters list quality*					
Coverage	86	89	87	90	88
Currency	77	78	78	80	78
Net currency	66	69	68	72	69

* Coverage is the percentage of voters on the list compared to the number of eligible voters in the province. Currency is the percentage of voters on the list at the right address. Net currency is the percentage of eligible voters on the list at the right address.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

GOAL 2: ENSURE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTORAL EVENTS.

Electoral events give British Columbians the opportunity to participate in the democracy of their province. As custodian of that right, Elections BC must ensure the efficient and effective administration of electoral events through the implementation of redistributed electoral boundaries, the development of voters lists, organizational readiness and providing optimum opportunities for eligible voters to participate in events.

Objectives:

Elections BC's objectives are to:

- Maintain an appropriate level of readiness to administer all electoral events.
- Administer electoral events using detailed event plans created and delivered by Elections BC staff.

Strategies:

Elections BC intends to:

- Administer the redistribution, enumeration, election and referendum on electoral form according to the approved event plans including:
  - Recruiting and training District Electoral Officers for 85 electoral districts
  - Redrawing and gazetting over 10,000 new voting areas
  - Producing and distributing new electoral maps
  - Updating and testing election information systems
  - Communicating extensively with voters to inform them about electoral activities and encourage registration and voting
  - Conducting targeted voter outreach to improve list quality prior to the election
  - Establishing DEO offices across the province
  - Hiring and training over 30,000 election and voter registration officials
  - Conducting voting and counting
  - Publishing election results, and
  - Reviewing legislated electoral finance disclosure and expense reports.
- Conduct quarterly reviews to confirm by-election, recall, referendum and initiative petition event readiness.

Elections BC's performance measure for Goal 2 will be to establish and achieve event-readiness milestones.

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage event-readiness milestones achieved on time	100	95	100	100	100

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

GOAL 3: PROVIDE AN INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE ELECTORAL PROCESS.

This goal recognizes the need for the province's electoral processes to be inclusive and accessible for all of British Columbia's voters. Ensuring the organization has information and services that meet voters' needs is fundamental to the success of Elections BC and the province's democracy.

Objectives:

Elections BC's objectives are to:

- Provide high-quality services to clients in a manner that is responsive to their needs.
- Provide the public with easy-to-understand information and engaging materials about the electoral process.

Strategies:

Elections BC intends to:

- Consult with voters and other clients to identify ways to improve their experience with the electoral process.
- Develop and implement long-term public education strategies to engage voters and improve democratic participation.
- Hold structured annual meetings with all registered political parties to provide information, reinforce roles and gather feedback.
- Investigate options for electronic filing of financial reports.
- Examine and improve the absentee voting process.
- Investigate options for developing new voting, counting and voting place technologies to increase efficiency and provide better service to voters.

To measure its performance on Goal 3, Elections BC will conduct an annual survey of selected client groups to evaluate client response to specific programs or services.

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage average annual satisfaction score	80	80	80	90	90

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

GOAL 4: BE A LEARNING ORGANIZATION THAT DEVELOPS AND SHARES BEST PRACTICES.

Elections BC is a highly focused and dynamic organization that maintains flexibility to respond to scheduled and on-demand electoral events. The organization is committed to the development and implementation of sound business and human resource activities that encourage best practices, partnerships with external clients and support for the organization's staff.

Objectives:

Elections BC's objectives are to:

- Participate in, encourage and support partnerships and inter-jurisdictional cooperation.
- Encourage and support staff in professional development.
- Establish a learning culture that fosters innovation.

Strategies

Elections BC intends to:

- Expand and enhance partnerships with key stakeholders including municipalities, data providers and other electoral jurisdictions.
- Observe and learn from electoral events in other jurisdictions.
- Participate in Canadian electoral conferences.
- Host the 2010 national Conference of Canadian Election Officials (CCEO).
- Refine and maintain employee planning and development.
- Maintain and enhance the staff training program.

To measure its performance on Goal 4, Elections BC will encourage staff participation in a variety of educational activities.

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Forecast	2008/09 Target	2009/10 Target	2010/11 Target
Percentage calculated learning index* score for EBC's permanent staff	82	81	80	80	80

* The learning index is an aggregate measure of Elections BC's participation in workshops, conferences, the CCEO Electoral Technology Committee, partnerships agreements, inter-jurisdictional sharing and employee training.

Financial Outlook

HOW WE ALLOCATE OUR RESOURCES

The activities of Elections BC are driven by the legislation it administers and the associated actions of its clients. The timing of by-elections, recall and initiative petitions and other electoral events are not controlled by Elections BC.

In consideration of the unpredictable nature of the work of the office, both the *Election Act* and the *Recall and Initiative Act* establish that all necessary expenses required for the administration of those Acts must be paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services recognizes that the budget needs of Elections BC are demand driven and has established a process whereby the Chief Electoral Officer advises the Chair of the Committee in writing when additional funds are required to administer electoral events. This process has been followed for all electoral events since 2002.

The following pages provide a summary of the financial and human resources required by Elections BC for on-going operations, purchases of capital assets and the planning and preparation for the approaching electoral events. Following its rigorous planning framework, Elections BC continues to plan for the four upcoming electoral events. Event budgets beyond fiscal year 2008/09 will be developed as part of that planning process.

Summary Ongoing Financial Outlook

		2007/08 (budget) $	2008/09 (planned) $	2009/10 (planned) $	2010/11 (planned) $
	ONGOING OPERATING COSTS				
	Funding				
	Requested	7,322,000	7,659,000	8,927,000	8,678,000
	Total funding for ongoing operating costs	7,322,000	7,659,000	8,927,000	8,678,000
Notes[1]	**Expenses for ongoing operating costs**				
1	Salaries and benefits	3,219,400	3,393,000	3,474,000	3,602,000
2	Amortization	945,000	928,000	954,000	1,423,000
3	Building occupancy charges	419,400	484,000	532,000	585,000
4	Office expenses and telecommunications	269,100	358,000	431,000	430,000
5	Corporate information systems	1,236,700	1,144,000	1,709,000	1,198,000
6	Event readiness	48,000	48,000	349,000	49,000
7	Address and boundary maintenance	337,500	289,000	397,000	442,000
8	Voters list maintenance	91,300	256,000	300,000	152,000
9	Political entity reporting	314,500	297,000	310,000	315,000
10	Officer salary and benefits	291,100	312,000	321,000	332,000
11	Voter education	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
	Total expenses for ongoing operating costs	7,322,000	7,659,000	8,927,000	8,678,000

1 See the following page for detailed information on notes 1 -11.

CAPITAL ASSETS				
Requested funding				
Personal computer hardware and software	14,200	67,000	203,000	-
Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software	1,113,600	227,000	1,190,000	5,250,000
Office furniture and equipment	-	-	-	-
Tenant improvements	-	-	-	-
Operating equipment	-	10,000	-	-
Total funding for capital assets	1,127,800	304,000	1,393,000	5,250,000
Expenditures for capital assets				
Personal computer hardware and software	14,200	67,000	203,000	-
Mainframe/mini computer hardware and software	1,113,600	227,000	1,190,000	5,250,000
Office furniture and equipment	-	-	-	-
Tenant improvements	-	-	-	-
Operating equipment	-	10,000	-	-
Total expenditures for capital assets	1,127,800	304,000	1,393,000	5,250,000
FULLTIME EQUIVALENTS (FTE)	44	44	44	44

2008/09 Event-Related Funding Requirements

Notes		2007/08 (budget) $	2008/09 (planned) $
12	Single transferable vote legislative framework	30,000	-
13	Referendum on Electoral Reform legislative framework	2,500	-
14	Electoral boundary redistribution	760,000	2,142,000
15	Enumeration	122,500	2,828,000
16	2009 General Election	724,000	5,897,000
17	2009 Referendum on Electoral Reform	-	297,000
		1,639,000	11,164,000

NOTES ON THE FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

1. Salaries and benefits of permanent and some temporary employees.

2. Amortization for the Electoral Information System, the Recall and Initiative Verification System (RIVERS), Motor Voter System, Inventory Distribution System and other electoral event systems, office computer systems and furniture

3. Accommodation & Real Estate Services (ARES) charges for office and warehouse rent.

4. Office expenses, telephones, supplies, equipment, postage, courier, bank charges, staff training, travel, legal fees, statutory advertising.

5. Office-wide information systems costs, including maintenance of the Electoral Information System, e-mail, internet and network services.

6. Forms, guides and software maintenance to ensure constant readiness for recall petitions, initiative petitions and by-elections.

7. Maintenance and updating of address register, base map updates, electoral district and voting area boundary maintenance.

8. Voters list updates, voter registration, software subscriptions and voters list system maintenance.

9. Reviews of financial reports of political entities. Guides, forms, and training for political entities, financial agents and auditors. Registration and updates of political parties, constituency associations, advertising sponsors. Maintenance of scanning and financial report electronic disclosure system.

10. Salary and benefits of the Chief Electoral Officer.

11. Voter education programs, including school kits.

12. Research, consultations and analysis of single transferable vote (STV) systems, including reviewing legislation of other jurisdictions using STV systems. Participate in developing legislative model. Prepare discussion materials regarding public policy issues.

13. Participate in preparing legislative framework for the next referendum. Prepare discussion materials regarding public policy issues.

14. Implement new electoral district (ED) boundaries as established by the *Electoral Districts Act*. Establish and implement new voting area (VA) boundaries within the new electoral districts. Includes voter and geographic data conversion, accelerated production of electoral district and voting area maps, street index and conversion tables and geo-referencing addresses to electoral districts and voting areas.

15. Prepare and execute most phases of an enumeration of eligible voters. Includes using external data sources such as the National Register of Electors, Canada Post's National Change of Address database, Census information, and selected municipal voters lists. Also includes a mailing to every residential address in B.C., targeted mailings to specific geographic areas of the province and registered voters whose records are suspected of being out-of-date and an advertising campaign integrated with the election and referendum advertising.

16. Plan and prepare for the 2009 General Election. Includes District Electoral Officer and Deputy District Electoral Officer selection and training; information technology planning and uplift; development, preparation, printing and packaging of election materials; acquisition of office equipment and supplies for district electoral offices and maintaining additional office space and temporary staff.

17. Plan and prepare for the 2009 Referendum on Electoral Reform. Includes preparation, printing and packaging of referendum materials.

Glossary of Terms

BC-STV
The BC-Single Transferable Vote is an electoral system proposed by the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. BC-STV is a proportional representation electoral system. Under the system, each electoral district would have between two and seven Members of the Legislative Assembly.

By-election
An election other than one conducted as part of a general election.

Electoral district
The province is divided into electoral districts (constituencies or ridings), each returning one Member to the Legislative Assembly.

Enumeration
The registration of voters by residence-to-residence visitation or by another method directed or authorized by the Chief Electoral Officer.

General election
Elections called on the same date for all electoral districts in the province to elect all Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Initiative petition
A petition under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to have a proposed law introduced in the Legislative Assembly.

Initiative vote
If the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Initiatives refers a successful initiative petition and draft Bill to the Chief Electoral Officer, the Chief Electoral Officer must hold an initiative vote under the *Recall and Initiative Act*.

Recall petition
A petition under the *Recall and Initiative Act* to remove a Member of the Legislative Assembly from office between elections.

Redistribution
A process to change electoral boundaries to account for population changes and other concerns regarding fair and effective representation.

Referendum
If the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers that an expression of public opinion is desirable on any matter of public interest or concern, the Lieutenant Governor in council may, by Regulation, order that a referendum be conducted under the *Referendum Act*. A referendum is binding on the government that initiated it.

Voters list
The voters list is prepared and maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer, and contains the names and residential addresses of registered voters in each electoral district.

Voting area
An electoral district is divided into voting areas for the purpose of assigning voters to voting places. A voting area is generally a geographic area containing no more than 400 voters.

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